

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00537 271233Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 PA-01 SSO-00 /027 W
-----050039 271235Z /10

O 271201Z FEB 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0331
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 0537

U.S. DEL NO. 28

FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON SYRIAN REFUSAL TO RECEIVE ATHERTON

REF: DAMASCUS 952; JERUSALEM 481

1. IN RESPONSE TO TISHRIN NEWSPAPER STORY THIS MORNING
IN DAMASCUS, QUOTED ON AP, AS AGREED WE ARE USING PRESS
GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN REFTEL. ONE MINOR ALTERATION WE RECOMMEND
IS TAKING OUT "IN THE NEGOTIATIONS" FROM THE FIRST ANSWER,
SO IT NOW READS: "A VISIT TO SYRIA AT SOME APPROPRIATE
TIME IS CERTAINLY NOT EXCLUDED BUT HE (ATHERTON)
HAS NO PRESENT PLANS TO GO TO DAMASCUS." WHEN ASKED IF SYRIA
REFUSED TO SEE ATHERTON, WE ALSO WILL NOT GO BEYOND CONFIRMING
THAT QUESTION OF A VISIT WAS DISCUSSED, PER JERUSALEM 481,
DECLINING TO GO INTO DETAILS OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS.

2. TISHRIN ARTICLE AS QUOTED BY AP WILL ALSO PROVOKE
QUESTION ABOUT SYRIAN CHARGE THAT ATHERTON IS
ONLY TRYING TO CONVINCE EGYPT TO DO A BILATERAL
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00537 271233Z

DEAL INSTEAD OF A "GLOBAL SOLUTION." WE PROPOSE
TO USE THE FOLLOWING ANSWER, UNLESS DEPARTMENT
INSTRUCTS OTHERWISE: "BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT
HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT THEY ARE SEEKING A
COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. THAT
IS ALSO THE AIM OF THE UNITED STATES. ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON IS WORKING WITH THE PARTIES ON A

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES TO FORM THE FRAMEWORK FOR
NEGOTIATIONS ON A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT."

3. THE ABOVE ANSWER SHOULD DOVETAIL WITH THE ANSWER TO
THE SECOND QUESTION IN DAMASCUS 952 REAFFIRMING
THAT USG IS NOT WRITING SYRIA OFF.
NEWLIN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
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